



Upstate Vet

**How Upstate Vet Used
theEMPLOYEEapp for
Communication During a Merger**

The Situation

Overcoming obstacles to clear, effective communication



In 2017, Upstate Vet (UVS) recognized holes in their communication strategy. One department fielded all questions and outreach from employees via email, bogging them down. They had no way to alert employees of situations like major equipment (such as the MRI machine) being down and unable to be used. And their Intranet contained information they needed, like policies and procedures, but it was not used by their employees due to its inaccessibility.

Beyond these obstacles to clear communication, the team wanted to improve culture, morale, and a fun team atmosphere. In part, this was because they were preparing for a merger in the next 6 months and knew they would need a way to bring two companies and groups of employees together. So, they set out to find a tool that would allow them to provide easy access to important information, policies, training tools, and procedures, while also allowing their team to share their own content and build community.

In October of 2017, they launched theEMPLOYEEapp and retired their old, unused Intranet.

“The app changed everything. It’s been critical to getting everything to all team members and make it so they can communicate with each other and with us.”

— Brittni Huff, Employee Training & Development Manager

The App: Bark Ward

Switching from email and an ineffective Intranet to a branded mobile communication app opened up a world of possibilities for Upstate Vet to solve their main comms challenges. The app gave them:

- The ability to selectively use push notifications on certain pieces of content allowed them to cut through the noise, so all targeted employees would see urgent or important updates. They were also able to use the push notification functionality to share information about equipment being down, shortages on supplies, weather delays or closings, and more.
- **News Feed and Explore** pages allow them to keep policies, procedures, and training information organized in a folder, while engaging content, news, and current information lives in the News Feed for maximum engagement.
- The ability to assign specific permissions to individual users and groups opened up the possibility for Upstate Vet employees to post specific content, swap shifts, or even share stories with a group(s) of employees.
- They have the ability to deploy **two profiles within one app**—one for all Specialty employees and one for Emergency personnel. This helps them keep emergency information separate from day-to-day communications.

Once the merger was complete, they created an app profile for each hospital, Greenville and Asheville, to make it easier to share hospital-specific information with each hospital's staff. And because profiles can be custom-branded, they will be able to mold each profile to reflect the culture and needs of each hospital, while still communicating top-down through one single mobile application.

BENEFITS

98%

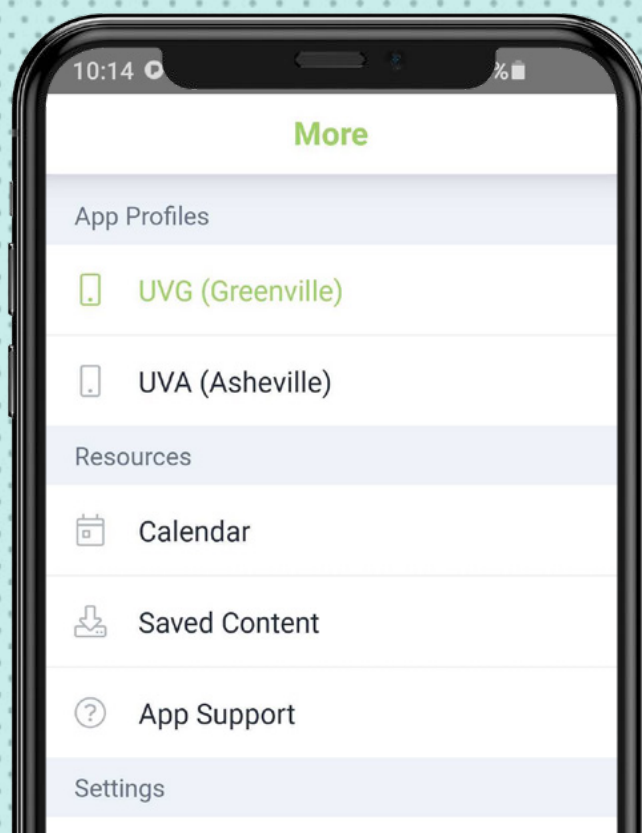
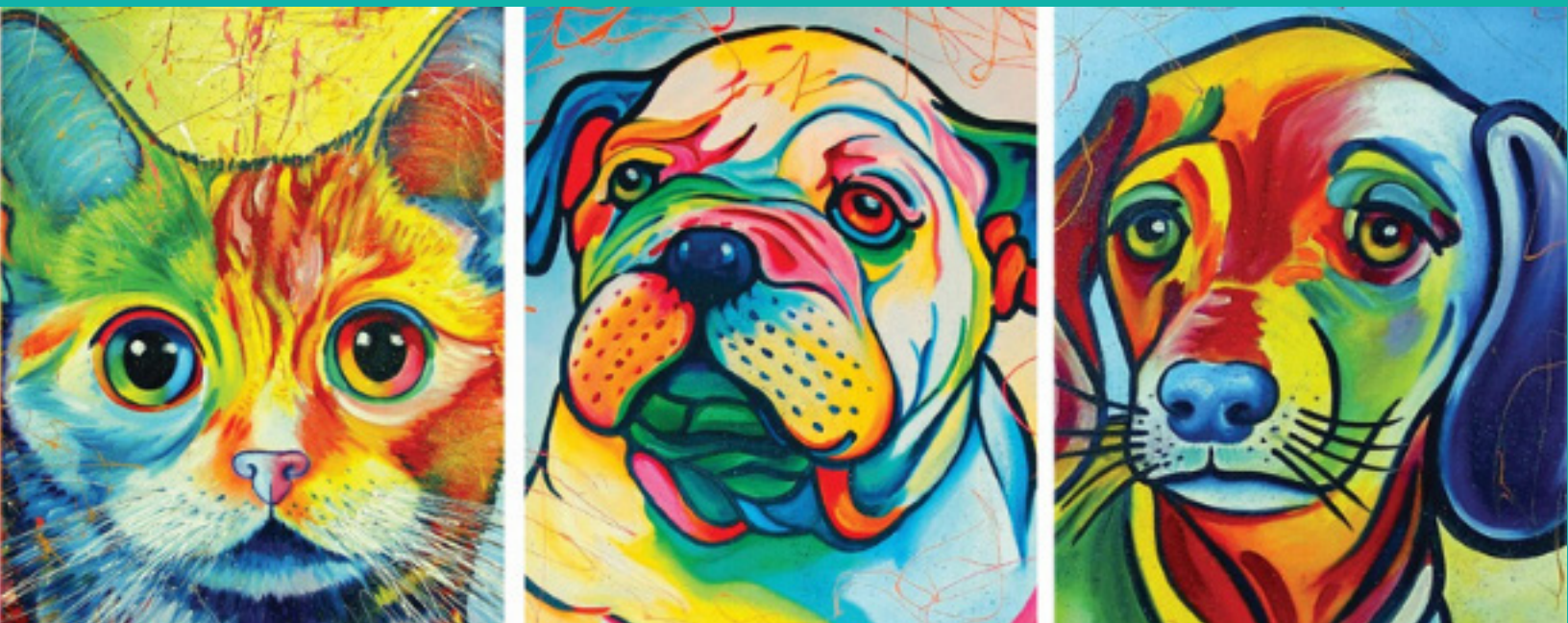
of Upstate Vet employees have registered and use theEMPLOYEEapp for work.

100%

of Upstate Vet employees who registered on theEMPLOYEEapp, use it every month for communication.

Communicating Through a Merger

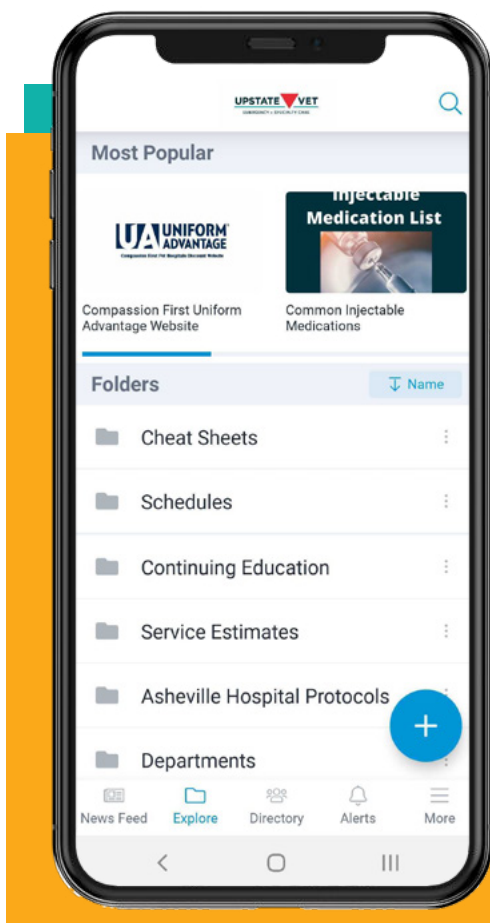
The two veterinary practices that make up Upstate Vet, a specialty practice and an ER practice, had worked together for 22 years, but never as one company. Previously, the ER side had limited communication with the daytime team and so, although there was no animosity during the merger, they weren't a cohesive team yet. They faced the challenge of making both the daytime staff and nighttime ER staff all feel included, engaged, and informed. theEMPLOYEEapp allowed them to seamlessly integrate two disparate teams into one platform.



Successes:

"[theEMPLOYEEapp] has raised the bar in terms of how we communicate within the hospital," says Brittnei Huff, Employee Training and Development Manager at Upstate Vet. "The app has been instrumental in helping with the integration of our new employees post-merger."

- They have reached **98% adoption** across their combined teams due to sharing need-to-know content and including the Bark Ward app in the onboarding process.
- In the first half of 2020, Upstate Vet had nearly **20,000 content opens**. With just over 200 employees that's over **16 content opens per user per month** on average.
- They have achieved incredibly high engagement:
 - » Of all theEMPLOYEEapp clients, Upstate Vet is consistently in the top five for most comments and top 15 for most likes, even as one of our smaller clients.
 - » 100% of their users are "active" each month, meaning every single employee consistently uses the app on a monthly basis.
 - » Each COVID-19 related piece of content has been opened an average of three times per person.
 - » Operational content performs very well with their work schedule being one of the most viewed pieces of content quarterly.
- The internal comms team has used the app for inclusion activities and recognition to build morale and community pre- and post-merger.
- Between the Directory and their New Hires Folder (where they post pictures and descriptions of new team members), they have enabled everyone to know who their colleagues are and to allow people who are never on the same shift to communicate.



Company Background:

Upstate Vet provides advanced medical, surgical, neurological, cancer, dental, and eye care for pets in Upstate South Carolina, Western North Carolina, Western Tennessee, and Northern Georgia. Learn more at www.upstatevet.com.



Interested in learning more about how theEMPLOYEEapp can help strengthen communications at your organization? Schedule an online demo today.

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